

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Approved 2/25/13

COUNTY OF NEWPORT

The Town Council of the Town of Tiverton, County and State aforesaid held a Joint Workshop with the School Committee and the Budget Committee on Thursday, the 10th day of January 2013 at 7:00 p.m. at the Tiverton High School Library, 100 North Brayton Road.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

**Councilor President Roderick, Vice-President deMedeiros, Councilor Arruda, Councilor Chabot, Councilor Gerlach, and Councilor Pelletier
Councilor Lambert was absent**

Town Administrator and Town Treasurer were also present.

1. Call To Order

Council President Roderick called the Council portion to order with a roll call.

School Committee Chair Sally Black called the meeting to order for School Committee with the pledge of allegiance to the flag and roll call. All were present.

B/C Chris Cotta, Alex Cote, Joseph Souza, Dave Perry, Donna Edwards, Madeline O'Dell, Laura Epke, Josh Mello, Joseph Bento

Discussion on Fiscal Year 2013/2014 Budget with School Committee and Budget Committee

Mr. Cotta began discussion. Received budgets from School and T/A outline of projections. Each year at this time still lot is fluid; don't know revenues or what Town Council will want for capital improvements. B/C will do diligence. Felt little uneasy with tax rate out there so early in process unfair to taxpayers, lot work to do yet. After 20 years in process Mr. Cotta insisted will step aside due to major personal commitments; however, will be around to help guide but will have new Chair. Like to hear from School Board, administration and Town Council as to big items need to wrestle with.

Pension, union issues, contracts, revenue, landfill money and projections, sewer issues with School Dept as well as other concerns that may have crept up.

Superintendent Rearick spoke for S/C; still working with DEM on sewer, rejected most recent site between Brayton Rd and softball field. At last meeting approved to send engineer to Stone Bridge Water Dept and ask if can look at couple of sites they own. Monthly reports, constant contact with DEM; was best site had but still working on location. School Committee decided to use some of the surplus on computers \$78,000 and installation and rehabilitation of auditorium seats for \$58,000. Couple items to discuss, safety in schools as result of Newton Conn and need for school resource officer. As of Monday Police Chief found way to assign Officer Cabral

to schools until end of year. Doesn't address next year, would like to work out with Council as to how to fund for next year. Need to determine how much both can commit to position and take and build in operational side. Still outstanding. Also second issue this fall during Fire Dept inspections sited for not having sprinklers in two wood shop areas in High School and one in Middle School. Priced just over \$60,000. Would like to take from reserve fund since one-time expense and won't show in capital expense. Third issue is a facility study for High School and Middle School. Middle 37 years old, High School 47 years. Would like to use as blue print to determine what needs to be done, heating, upgrades, repairs, etc. Want validation for voters of needs. Talked to JCG Architecture and they recommend 50 to 75 thousand. Recommend lower number but not in budget yet, like to discuss.

Mr. Cotta, concur personally that over years good at budgeting roofs, etc but only have remodeled science wing and not addressed the structures themselves, pointing of buildings, windows, etc. Behooves to get a road map for the issues faced with to maximize the life of the buildings. Committee believes facility plan will do that. Mr. Cotta suggests will help put in capital outlays over next 5/10 years. Should also be done on Town's side since significant exposure to us. Rearick 3.3% overall increase and 2/6% increase on tax rate. Only one additional 2/5 position in Ranger School with math. Assumptions are enrollment staying consistent with class size of 24 to 25 in elementary at this point. Salaries \$300.000 of increase, special

education \$400,000, medical \$100,000 Met School \$100,000.

Met school is additional mandate, with funding formula requires payment of \$100,000 increase for tuitions to be phased in over 5 year period. Schools will also be looking for more computers.

Councilor Roderick on Town Council side have done first pass. Greatest impact on health care, pension cost, capital improvements. Cotta questioned health care side still same co-operative. Rearick agreed same. T/A Town in health care savings. Mr. Cotta thought HSA would save money. Councilor Roderick stated initially, but don't have cost at this point. Capital improvements have some of same issues with buildings but need keep in mind what taxpayers can afford. Will continue to have meetings and work together to come up with budget that serves needs of all Town.

Mr. Cotta, need to handle issues that have known of but ignored for years. No easy solution to this budget to make work. Applaud effort to try and find where problems really are. Mr. Rearick informed all contracts on school side settled, Council 94 expires 6/30 and beginning negotiations. Chair Sally Black, need work together. New schools only got 30% reimbursement, lowest can get. Representative Edwards working on this issue. Representative Edwards submitted bill for second year to increase the funding to 40% retroactive to our debt. S/C will be there to testify. Thanked Rep Edwards for persistent efforts.

T/A stated went to House Committee previously asking for the 50% and was unsuccessful. Rep Edwards stated different time. Tiverton has been receiving some favorable reviews and hoping to show need for increased funding. T/A informed all contracts negotiated and in place. Teamsters will expire 6/30th and will begin negotiations soon.

Joseph Sousa going in 5th year of recession, unemployment still high. During elections heard many people. Need bare bones budget, necessity only. Laura Epke, questioned if all town employees on HSA. Councilor Chabot, except Teamsters. Questioned if planning on tracking separately cost so can see how much money the HSA saves, could be considered by School when there negotiations come about. Even just spreadsheet to see if savings going forward. T/A stated January Blue Cross bill significantly lower. Epke would like to see hard numbers to track. Questioned if same collaborative rate with Blue Solutions. Mr. Fiori, if same program would be same rate. At this point School has a few different options, not one plan for everyone. Ms. Pallasch if would be working with other towns with HSA. Mr. Fiori each town based on its own experience rate. Town branched off HSA category still getting benefit of experience rate. School will know rates in few weeks. Everyone would go up the same percentage from base amount based on experience rate in any of the Blue Cross Plans.

Ms. Epke noted regarding tax rate information on Monday's Council

meeting, agree premature to bring out tax info at this point particularly since B/C puts those two pieces together and hadn't even been talked about yet. Know all interested and want to see but premature. Mr. Cotta just through town wide reval and from B/C standpoint doesn't know where town wide assessment is. Need to look at expenditures and revenue. Will put people on edge, very uncomfortable doing that. T/A looking to determine where we are and where heading. Still estimate but at least know so not surprised later on, not meant to be final analysis.

S/C member Deborah Pallasch stated T/C put out one number and next night S/C put different number and created confusion to people. Phones were ringing off the hook. Nothing in vacuum; done in collaborative method. Councilor Roderick in discussions and draft. Ms. Arruda from B/C now will take a little while to undo that information put out. Perception is that will be the rate. Mr. Cotta last thing should be doing and should do it together. Discussion pursued in regard to disclosing rate at Town Council meeting. Mr. Cotta fine to speak in terms of trying to keep funding level, etc. but distracts from good work being done.

Councilor Pelletier restated not doing in vacuum, getting new Councilors up to speed and doing process thoroughly and may need to assert is the absolute first draft. Context to it, perhaps not done this type workshop in past and will be cognitive of it going forward. Seems to reinforce cuts need to make and other issues. Ms.

Pallasch, if S/C does it as well there will be lots of numbers out there and very confusion. All one budget and the B/C responsible to put it together and say where it is. Mr. Rearick, when doing budget only do School Dept, when Town Council published said we were at the cap. Council should work on their number and not worry about the S/C. Fact is Committee got angry calls questioning what School Dept is doing. Don't appreciate it, was not S/C number which was significantly less than stated. DeMedeiros opined what said not necessarily what was reported. T/A was informative based on information and indicated was estimates and preliminary. Need to know the direction going. Mr. Cotta, appreciate where coming from and once got calls went to T/A presentation and numbers were stale. Foolhardy to hold accountable. Opined the way it was done was just not thought through. Feel fact discussing now to public puts on notice as to what tax rate will be.

Like to move on to police pension, where we stand, reports done, everything in to Municipal Affairs, etc. Laura Epke also concerns on pension, pump out boat and service approved by prior Council. Wants update on sewer project, what capital from surplus, current surplus. Thought might be beneficial for the first few meetings since a lot of issues to start discussions early and thought next Thursday night have Council then week after the S/C to talk through some of the issues. Mr. Cotta also like to know town audit and where stand with cash. Consensus agreed. Discussion as to scheduling. Dave Perry also bring T/C in more often, last year S/C came in 4 times and

Council didn't come in at all. Mr. Cotta important, last year B/C had tough time with capital purchases on Town side which could have been preempted if there was more communication between Council and B/C instead of being surprised at end of process.

Councilor Roderick stated that was the reason called for this meeting; need to discuss the major ticket items that have big impact on budget. Should be one group and not be pitting against each other. Mr. Cotta at least if have facts together, last year discussion of landfill was archaic. Never had full picture, if numbers were wrong was big mistake. Need to stop those pitfalls, end of day taxpayers suffer. Suggested Council liaisons good idea. Councilor Roderick work in progress still holding workshops. Ms. Epke listened to most of Mondays Council meeting, didn't hear library bond and questioned if starting process. Treasurer Denise Saurette met with Library today and meeting next Tuesday. Couple of options for funding, one short window with little interest paid next year and other wouldn't start until following year. Laura Epke questioned any progress on benefits of restructuring the TIF Bond. Treasurer will discuss next week. Laura, lastly, B/C would like meetings taped. No money in budget would ask at Council meeting on Monday call for volunteers. Cost is \$50.00 per meeting; perhaps some carry forward moneys to pay.

Alex Cote on 5 yr plan for capital, highway, fire and police. Had under Ray Houle and never seen one since. T/A has 5year plan on desk now that requires over 5 million at minimum each year. Has to be

reviewed, talk to dept heads and then present to Council. Mr. Cotta asked if includes road, response no. One of the issues deferred and now problem. Need all issues on table even if in plan and not addressed. Councilor Roderick ideal to have plan and then review to what need and then what can afford. Ms Epke and Pallasch stated earlier work through summer months on continual basis going through entire Town and blend with School capital needs for prioritized plan to start chipping away. Mr. Cotta agrees with subcommittee. Have three good groups here and feel will work together. Need work co-operatively to get best information out to people.

Mr. Cotta lot to do, new members, available to have anyone contact, Council Roderick also available. Dave Perry requested expenditure report for Thursday. Treasurer has sent to Laura Epke and will see copied. Would like updated each month. Cotta as to revenues doesn't see any new major increases in revenue. Councilor Roderick, all concern best interest of Tiverton, like or not need to compromise. Process just started, Council committed to working on budget and sure Mr. Rearick also when get to final numbers will truly be best for Town.

Mr. Sousa questioned increase in state aid. Rearick correct about \$77,000 number given by Dept of Ed. Process begins early, best numbers. Not Governor's budget; is what RIDE gives under state aid formula. Will know better as get closer where State stands. Better

with funding formula. Mr. Souza concern with school spending additional funds if receive more than budgeted. Pallasch stated try to use conservative numbers.

Cotta closed meeting for Budget Committee, School Comm adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilor Chabot motioned, seconded by Councilor deMedeiros to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

A True Copy.

ATTEST: _____

Nancy L. Mello, Town Clerk